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May 19, 2017: Weekly Message from Interim President Curtis McCray

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May 19, 2017: Weekly message from Interim President Curtis McCray

Dear Campus Community,

Since I came to Wright State University as the interim president in March, I have worked with many of you to prepare for our next fiscal year, which begins July 1. I was charged by the Board of Trustees with balancing the budget, reducing expenditures, and resolving a very large deficit from the fiscal year 2018 budget while adding a small reserve to the budget.

I want you to hear this news from me first. Today I will propose to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee a plan to balance the university's FY18 budget.

This plan includes significant cuts to personnel and operations.

Wright State employees impacted by personnel changes can expect to be notified starting the week of June 12.

You can read the proposal at: <http://wright.edu/bot>

I propose the university eliminate about 71 currently filled positions, including about 24 classified staff members, approximately 43 unclassified staff members, and about four faculty members.

I also propose that the university eliminate close to 107 positions that are currently vacant or will be vacant by the end of June. Some vacancies will continue to be filled, and our process of emergency and strategic hiring continues.

Eliminating the currently held and vacant positions would save the university a total of \$14.1 million in salary and benefits.

Sixty-five percent of the proposed eliminated positions are considered administrative positions by the Ohio Department of Education's administrative headcount ratio in its Efficiency and Advisory Committee Report.

The budget proposal also includes \$8 million in savings through operational changes affecting every unit on campus. These changes include reductions in travel, professional services, student employment, repairs and maintenance, and some scholarships and fellowships. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics plans to eliminate both the men's and the women's swimming and diving teams.

In addition, the university expects to save \$6 million from last year's voluntary retirement incentive plan and \$2 million through other attrition from the FY17 budget.

Mergers of colleges or divisions and centralization of certain services are not part of the proposed FY18 budget, but are being explored as the university seeks to increase efficiency and eliminate duplication of services.

Your feedback on this proposal is welcome and will help to shape the trustees' thinking on the budget. Responses from Wright State email addresses sent by university community members will be accepted until June 5. Comments will be made available on the Board of Trustees website by June 8. Please email your comments to: commentonbudget@wright.edu

At the annual budget workshop on June 8, the Board of Trustees will vote to approve the fiscal year 2018 budget.

Wright State will provide support and resources to employees affected by job eliminations. The university will continue the tuition remission benefit for displaced employees and their immediate dependents for two years following their separation date from the university. Human Resources will also provide counseling, resume reviews, interviewing critiques, and skills assessment to employees.

The university will host a career expo on June 27 for employees whose jobs are eliminated. The expo will match employees with local companies and higher education employers in need of their skill sets and experience.

The budget proposal will be presented today at the Board of Trustees Finance Committee meeting, beginning at 9 a.m. at 2455 Presidential Drive. We are meeting at this location since the Science Olympiad National Tournament has reserved most meeting rooms on campus.

Employees have asked that we stream board meetings online. You can watch the Finance Committee meeting on the university Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/WrightStateUniversity>

Supervisors and managers are asked to provide employees with the time to attend or watch the meeting as business conditions allow.

I will provide more details on the cuts and changes in future email messages and at the board's budget workshop on June 8.

Our goal with balancing the budget was to do what was needed to put Wright State University in a stronger financial position and ensure the university can continue to provide an excellent and affordable education to students. The changes we must make are painful--and unfair to many--but are needed for the long-term good of the university, our students, and the region.

Eliminating someone's job is not an easy decision. Many of you who will be affected have performed excellently and may have not caused our budget problems. For these reasons I am very sorry and personally wish we had not come to this moment.

Curtis L. McCray
Interim President

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